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# Essay on Truth





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# ESSAY ON TRUTH

By MILTON R. SCOTT.

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"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,  
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

— SHAKESPEARE.

"The highest perfection of human reason is to know that  
there is an infinity of truth beyond its reach."

— PASCAL.

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# Essay on Truth.

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## CHAPTER I.

### LIMITATIONS OF OUR KNOWLEDGE IN RESPECT TO PHYSICAL SCIENCE.

Since the world began the question, "What is truth?" has been asked by theologians, by philosophers, by scientists, by skeptics, by scoffers, by devotees, by men in all the walks and ways of life; but although there have been solutions and solutions and answers and answers, no final solution or answer has been vouchsafed.

But while men have never compassed the substance of truth or defined its essence, we know that it is both vast and minute, both manifold and particular, both abstract and concrete, both spiritual and material, both absolute and relative, and both subjective and objective.

To illustrate and emphasize the subjective side or element of truth — in other words, to show that truth of all kinds is essentially *within us* as well as without us — is the point and purpose of this essay; and we shall be well satisfied if we can

furnish a clear and rational — however partial it may be — discussion of our subject without attempting a complete answer to the question, “What is Truth?”

Let us look at some of the difficulties in the way of our obtaining a complete apprehension of any truth whatever, difficulties alike inherent in the substance of truth and the limitations of our capacity.

At first thought it would seem that in the natural or material world, we should at least find the *substratum* of the complete knowledge we desire and a clear and abiding foundation for the edifice we would fain rear to the skies; but manifestly Nature will not have it thus. Not only does she hide the infinities of space from our eyes, but she will not permit us to know the *essence* of her tiniest seed or flower or even of her atoms and molecules.

And not only so; but she is full of mysteries and paradoxes and illusions — shall we also say delusions? — wherewith she beguiles and interests and stimulates and *educates* us.

Our eyes are not made to receive the direct rays of the sun, but must be content with reflected or borrowed light; — are not the eyes of our understanding similarly constituted in reference to the reception of Truth?

Our stomachs are not made for pure nutrition, but must receive all food in bulk, subjecting it to the mysterious process of digestion and assimilation and throwing off the excrement; — do we not have to go through a psychological process similar to this before we can make any truth a part of our constitution?

All or nearly all the seeds of the vegetable kingdom are surrounded with a shell of greater or less hardness, which is necessary not only for the protection of the shell, but for its formation and ripening. Does it not seem necessary that a large proportion of the Truth we appropriate should be covered with a shell of error or what we call “superstition?”

The air we breathe is composed of 79 parts of nitrogen and 21 parts of oxygen; but thus far science has revealed no office of the nitrogen, so far as our breathing is concerned, except to dilute the oxygen that we may not become intoxicated therewith. Is there also such a thing as the necessary dilution of Truth on account of our weak and imperfect understandings?

“Sciences” almost without number have been evolved from our investigation of Nature’s phenomena; but it is still an open question whether we know anything at all as it really is; and as said before, we can not learn the essence of the

smallest portion of matter, organic or inorganic. Who can define a single one of the seventy or more "elements" into which all matter is now supposed to be divided? Who can fully explain any of the "laws of Nature," with which we assume to be so familiar? Who can tell us what matter itself really is?

To our physical vision the surface of our planet is a plane extending a limited number of miles in every direction; and although we know from the testimony of geographers and astronomers that we are the inhabitants of a spherical or nearly spherical body eight thousand miles in diameter, the rotundity of the earth is beyond the conception of our minds as well as the sight of our eyes. Our geographies dare not tell us that the earth is round *like itself*, but must needs employ the symbol of a ball or orange in order to express its shape in terms that we can comprehend.

In mathematical geography we assume that the earth has an equator, that it has an axis of rotation with a north and a south pole, that it has two tropics and two polar circles and parallels of latitude and longitude, by all of which we may measure distances from point to point on its surface as well as the course of its revolution around the sun; but from the standpoint of objective

fact, we know that there is no line or axis passing through the earth's center and no equator or other circle on its surface, all these symbols having their only reality *in our minds*.

How far, then, must we consider the science of Geography subjective as well as objective?

It is very easy for scientific men to give us the chemical elements — with their exact proportions — that enter into the composition of a grain of wheat; but, alas, they can give no answer to any inquiries concerning its real essence. In vain will we ask them *what makes it a grain of wheat* or how its life principle is combined with the material substance of which it is composed. They can only give us the name of this life principle, and hardly that.

And what is true of the grain of wheat is true of every particle of matter to which we may direct our attention.

In response to the cry for more light, "Evolution" has come forth and given us the most marvelous revelations concerning the laws and principles which have always operated in the material world and in our political and social systems; but concerning the essence of matter or the origin of vegetable and animal life or the manner — the *how* — of the various processes of motion and change that we see in the material world, its hand

is on its mouth, and its voice is as silent as the grave. Evolution knows not these things, neither can it know them.

Need we wonder, then, that many honest people declare that there is no material substance and no realities except those which exist in our minds, and that others go still further and declare that our ideas themselves are only dreams and illusions?

## CHAPTER II.

LIMITATIONS OF OUR KNOWLEDGE IN RESPECT TO  
PHYSICAL SCIENCE — *Continued.*

For many centuries after the rotundity of the earth became known, astronomers continued their investigations under the mistaken notion that the sun and other heavenly bodies revolved around it from day to day, until Copernicus appeared in the sixteenth century and fully established the fact that the earth and other planets revolved around the sun. But not until Kepler discovered his three laws of planetary motion — that all the planets revolve in elliptical orbits, that the radius-vector of each planet describes equal areas in equal times, and that the squares of the periodic times of the planets are proportional to the cubes of their mean distances from the sun — could any satisfactory computations be made concerning the motions and relations of the heavenly bodies.

But even Kepler could not tell *why* planets move in this manner; and therefore it was left for Isaac Newton to bring us the grand revelation that the motions of the heavenly bodies are determined by the same law of gravitation that

causes water to seek its level and an apple to fall to the earth.

But no one has yet appeared to tell us what gravitation is or whence it came. And although we can now understand that the attraction of the sun — otherwise called centripetal force — causes the earth to move in an elliptical orbit, what and whence is the mighty centrifugal force that starts it on its course and continues its unceasing motion of one thousand miles a minute?

Thus we see that whether we are surveying the stars in their courses or searching after the secret of the smallest seed or flower, we are bewildered and baffled and lost in mysteries that will not dissolve at our bidding. And however wide may be the horizon of our knowledge, wider and still wider will be the horizon of the unknown and the unknowable — still higher will be the heights, and still deeper will be the depths of the unsearchable mystery!

And in the evolution of all physical sciences the fact stands out in bold relief that all progress has been made and perhaps must always be made by working on false or partly false hypotheses.

The medical profession of our day have made the most surprising advances in anatomy and surgery; but how few — we had almost said if any — specific remedies for the ills to which

our flesh is heir can be found in the whole range of "materia medica." And how largely does the practice of medicine still consist in a series of "experiments!"

## CHAPTER III.

LIMITATIONS OF OUR KNOWLEDGE IN RESPECT TO  
OTHER SCIENCES — AND RELIGION.

Geometry and other branches of the higher mathematics are supposed to be perfectly “exact;” but we do not have to study the various geometrical figures half a lifetime before we learn that we can only produce the *symbols* of squares, circles and triangles, and that the real point or line or figure of any kind exists in our minds alone. And how little objective fact do we find in the whole range of the higher mathematics!

Will we fare a whit better in the realm of Psychology? If it were possible for us to become acquainted with the whole array of ancient and modern philosophers — from Thales and Pythagoras and Socrates and Plato and Aristotle down to Bacon and Locke and Descartes and Spinoza and Kant and Berkeley with all their cotemporaries and followers — and to learn all their “systems” by heart, how little we would still know concerning the essential nature of our own minds, and how imperfectly we would comprehend the relation of the mind or spirit to the material

world, which is the essential theme of all their speculations and discussions. Would we not still be unable to define either mind or matter or to draw the line of distinction between them? Would we even know whether there is such a line?

With all the learning and labors of the world's philosophers, it were not impertinent to ask whether they have not raised more questions than they have settled. Saying nothing about any other unsettled questions, we need only cite the fact that both wise and unwise men are still debating the question whether our wills are free or are bound up in a chain of cause and effect, commonly called "necessity." And even if the weight of authority and the voice of consciousness alike declare that we are free agents, we are still unable to conceive or define the nature of our freedom. Neither can we dispose of the *motives* which begirt us, and by which our volitions are influenced in greater or less measure — if not actually determined.

"In thoughts more elevate they reasoned high,  
Of Providence, foreknowledge, will and fate,  
Fixed fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute;  
And found no end, in wandering mazes lost."

Is our "consciousness of freedom" only a subjective experience? Is man's belief in his free

agency a lawful (natural) possession or is it fire stolen from the gods?

The world is full of moral codes and systems; and at first blush it would seem no difficult matter for any one to learn the precise course of conduct for himself and others. But morality has its secrets as well as physics, and by no system that has ever been devised are those secrets revealed to us — nor can they be.

To illustrate our meaning, take the command, "Thou shalt not kill." Not only has this command come down to us as from the fire and smoke of Mount Sinai, but it is a command approved by the reason of mankind. And yet there are cases in which the taking of human life is justifiable under the law of self-defense, (which is universally recognized as the first law of our nature), cases in which it is at least excusable on account of great provocation or great danger, and cases in which it is a positive virtue as in battle against the enemies of one's country.

And when we come to the positive rules of morality, it is even more difficult to reduce their application to any sort of precision and definiteness. In fact, we doubt whether it can be said of any act whatever that it is always wholly right or wholly wrong without reference to the circumstances and conditions surrounding it or the mo-

tives which prompt its performance. To say the least, the rules of our conduct are not written on the face of the sky or revealed in the voice of the thunder and the lightning!

Must we therefore abolish the distinction between right and wrong and turn human life into a moral chaos? We verily fear we should have to do so, if morality were a wholly objective science. But happily man is endowed with powers of reason and conscience — of which we shall speak hereafter.

In the realm of Religion we have systems many and creeds many and doctrines many and prophets many and teachers many and Lords many and Gods many; but although these systems have all come to us with claims of divine authority, and have been received by honest souls as complete “revelations” of religious truth, we may still ask how many of the questions that perplex men’s souls in reference to their relation to the author of their being have been settled by theologians and priests and ministers? How much objective fact can we claim as the *basis* of our faiths and hopes and aspirations?

Whence then cometh wisdom, and where is the place of understanding?

## CHAPTER IV.

## WE CANNOT LIVE BY FACTS ALONE.

What is the meaning and interpretation—the why and wherefore—of these things? Is Nature merely playing hide-and-seek with her fond and devoted children, or is it possible to find a *reason* for her manner of dealing with us? Is it possible that in hiding the truth from our eyes while she stimulates our search for it, she acts in harmony with the inmost principles of our nature and wishes to secure for us the largest *life* of which we are capable?

She has undoubtedly given us senses, organs and faculties for the reception of facts, and throughout her wide domain she has spread her facts before us in the greatest profusion, all of which are more or less interesting and more or less valuable to us. Also, she has both given us an ardent desire for the possession of facts and made the possession of facts an essential condition of all education and development.

But on the other hand, she has plainly established a law which declares that man shall not live by facts alone. Ardent as may be our desire

to compass the facts which the earth and the universe present to us, bare facts and laws would no more satisfy our minds and souls than the bare earth without trees or plants or grass or flowers would satisfy our eyes. We must think and feel and imagine and wonder and aspire as well as know.

Perhaps the highest office of scientific facts is to open the doors of the unseen world to our thoughts and imaginations.

When Jesus said, "Consider the lilies of the field how they grow," he gave us no new facts; but what a world of thought and suggestion he presented to us.

"Without a parable spake he not unto them," is written concerning this same Jesus—must not all teachers and prophets of Truth follow his example in greater or less measure?

Highly as we may admire the faculties within us by which we become acquainted with the facts and laws of the material world, our most god-like faculty is not perception or cognition, but Imagination!

If this be claiming too much, we may yet safely say that no system of education—or of religion—that ignores this faculty will accomplish its object or prove itself worthy of any acceptance.

All children delight in fairyland; and the exercise of their imaginations with stories and legends and folk-lore is as necessary for their mental—and moral—development as the exercise of their bones and muscles is necessary for their physical development. As clearly as the wings of birds are made for flying, the minds of children are made to revel in the mysterious and incomprehensible. “The sense of the marvelous in children,” says Charles Wagner, “is the first form of that sense of the Infinite, without which a man is like a bird deprived of wings.”

Must we not attribute the intense curiosity of children and the interest which they manifest in Nature’s phenomena to the appeal which all new facts make to their imaginations? We can not understand the ministry of Mother Nature, but we know how she loves little children, and is always ready to show them her beauty and glory and make them happy. And this for the same reason that she gives her light and warmth to the young plants and flowers—she wants them to grow!

What is it that gives children such relish in play? Plainly it is not alone the physical exercise that sends the blood on such a rapid course through their veins; for they also enjoy those plays in which they find little or no physical ex-

ercise. Is not their interest in play mainly due to the fact that they nearly always bring their imaginations into exercise by "playing" school or church or store or some other occupation of their elders?

And is not the boy who bestrides a broomstick and calls it his "horse," doing something more than amusing himself? And is the little girl who fondles and caresses her waxen doll so fondly and bestows so much care and attention upon it merely going through a process of make-believe? Rather, is she not quickening the germs of her inmost being and in some measure preparing herself for the motherhood which is her high and holy calling?

Heaven pity all those children whose parents are too poor or too stolid and indifferent to give them the opportunity for play which their natures require. Heaven also pity those children of the rich who are denied that free play with other children which is the natural birthright of every child born into the world.

The fiction of "Santa Claus" not only gives children the intensest pleasure by surrounding their Christmas presents with a halo of mystery; but as the pleasing illusion is gradually dispelled, they learn to appreciate the real Santa Claus, whose home is in the hearts of their parents and

friends, and they also learn or may learn how it is more blessed to give than to receive. A most wonderful moral teacher and exemplar is this same Santa Claus.

And are we not all children in Nature's vast nursery and playground, with imaginations to be exercised, feelings to be aroused and mental and moral natures to be developed? And is it not the office of all science and all art—and of Religion as well—to perform this ministry in our behalf? As certainly as our bodies are to be nourished by the fruits of the earth our spirits are to be nourished and expanded by the mysteries of the unseen and the unknown. Is not mystery the native air of our souls?

“Oh, blest of Heaven, whom not the languid songs  
Of luxury, the siren, not the bribes  
Of sordid wealth, nor all the gaudy spoils  
Of pageant honor can seduce to leave  
Those ever-blooming sweets, which from the store  
Of Nature fair Imagination culls  
To charm the enlivened soul.

\* \* \* \* \*

“And thus the men  
Whom Nature's works can charm with God himself  
Hold converse, grow familiar day by day  
With his conceptions, act upon his plans,  
And form to his, the relish of their souls.”

Therefore we do not hesitate to say that if Nature permitted us to know all that we desire to know—if she had no holy of holies which we

are not permitted to enter—the *zest* of our existence would be gone forever. If we could pierce the mysteries of Nature's manifold processes—if we could understand the unceasing motions and changes which are everywhere present to our eyes—if we could comprehend the origin of the universe or the essence of a grain of sand—that pursuit of truth which is one of the highest satisfactions of the soul would be our prerogative no longer.

Some one has said that if he could capture the bird of truth he would immediately release it that he might have the privilege of pursuing it again.

Let us therefore rejoice in the assurance that Mother Nature knows what manner of persons we are, and that all her mysteries and illusions are but proofs that she cares for us as wisely and faithfully as she cares for the flowers of the field and garden and the trees of the forest. In her manner of hiding her secrets from our eyes she seeks not merely to stimulate our imaginations, but all the faculties of which we are possessed. If she chastens our curiosity, it is because she recognizes our reason and moral sense, and seeks through these principles of our nature to clothe us with her own likeness and image. If she refuses to give our senses the full

satisfaction which they crave, it is because she would lift us above the world of sense and give us a home in that ideal world which is our birth-right and heritage.

From all these things we may both learn that there is a spirit in man that transcends his bodily senses, but that Nature herself is spiritual as well as material!

“Flower in the crannied wall,  
I pluck you out of the crannies,  
Hold you here, root and all, in my hand.  
Little flower — but if I could understand  
What you are, root and all, and all in all,  
I should know what God and man is.”

“These are thy glorious works, Parent of good,  
Almighty! Thine this universal frame,  
Thus wondrous fair; Thyself how wondrous then,  
Unspeakable! who sittest above the heavens,  
To us invisible, or dimly seen  
In these thy lowest works; yet these declare  
Thy goodness beyond thought and power divine.”

Henry Drummond might well have followed his work on “Natural Law in the Spiritual World” with another on “Spiritual Law in the Natural World.”

## CHAPTER V.

## THE LETTER AND THE SPIRIT.

Not only must the facts of science receive the breath of life from our imaginations, but science herself must be idealized (spiritualized) before we can appreciate her message. How little profit we would find in chemical analysis, if the secrets of every atom did not rebuke our pride and teach us that humility of spirit which becomes all seekers after light and truth. And how little profit we would find in the study of Astronomy, if the mysteries of this science did not suggest to us that there is a gravitation of the stars for our souls as well as a gravitation of the earth for our bodies!

Are Esop's fables true or false? Is there any more certain truth under the sun than we find in the parables of Jesus, in the plays of Shakespeare, in the poetry of Milton and Dante and Goethe, and in the novels of Charles Dickens and Victor Hugo and George Eliot? Did any clearer message ever come from heaven to earth than the singing of Jenny Lind? Do our obligations to physical science exceed our obligations

to the arts of the painter and the sculptor? In fine, what are Fiction and Music and Poetry and Painting and Sculpture and Love but the better angels of our nature, whereby we are caught up into the third heaven where we see and hear the things which it is not lawful for us to utter?

“The poet’s eye in a fine frenzy rolling,  
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to  
heaven;  
And as Imagination bodies forth  
The forms of things unknown, the poet’s pen  
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy Nothing  
A local habitation and a name.”

Does not the novel of high imagination — when it is truly artistic — both interest us the more and convey the larger measure of truth to our minds from the fact that it is a *creation* of the author, and not a mere narrative of actual events? Are not the idealistic school of novelists more true to nature and to life than the realists, who claim that they always picture life to us exactly as it is?

Why is Dickens’ “Micawber” so intensely interesting to us? Plainly, we think, because the genius of the great novelist has given us a picture not merely of one Micawber, but of all the Micawbers that ever lived.

In “Uncle Tom’s Cabin” the account of “Eliza” crossing the Ohio river on cakes of ice in the

dead of a winter's night with her child in her arms has thrilled the souls of thousands and thousands of readers, although the actual fact is beyond the range of possibility. Which is to say, that the story is a true one in a higher sense than that of mere fact; for in this scene Mrs. Stowe gave us a picture not of one slave mother's suffering, but of the suffering experienced by all the slave mothers of the south.

Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" was given to the world "under the similitude of a dream;" but what a panorama of life it presents to our view. And this because its allegorical characters are all bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. And may not the same be said of Homer's heroes and Milton's angels, and all the forms and shapes of men that Dante saw in his Paradise, in his Purgatory and in his Inferno?

"What do you learn from Paradise Lost?" says Coleridge. "Nothing. What do you learn from a cookery book? Something new, something you did not know before, in every paragraph. But would you therefore put the cookery book on a higher level of estimation than the divine poem? What you owe to Milton is not a mere knowledge of facts; what you owe to him is *power* — that is, exercise and expansion to your own latent capacity of sympathy with the Infinite, where

every pulse and each separate influx is a step upward, ascending as upon Jacob's ladder from earth to mysterious altitudes above the earth."

"The greatest painters have rarely stooped to the painting of landscape," says a distinguished author and historian, "since no imaginary landscape can surpass what everybody has seen in nature. But what mortal woman ever expressed the ethereal beauty of a Madonna of Raphael or Murillo? What man ever possessed such a sublimity of aspect and figure as the creations of Michael Angelo? A beggar arose from his hand the patriarch of poverty, the hump of his dwarf is impressed with dignity; his infants are men, and his men are giants. In his hands sculpture became not demoralizing and Pagan, but instructive and exalting from his grand conceptions of dignity and power."

Thus we may see that in all art and literature — may we not also say in physical science? — the letter often kills, while the spirit always gives life and truth!

## CHAPTER VI.

WHAT MAKES KNOWLEDGE MOST VALUABLE TO  
US?

It has already been stated that in the study of Geometry we can only produce the *symbols* of the lines, squares, circles, triangles and other figures which we are considering. Not only is this the case, but every concrete line that we may use contradicts the definition of a line, since the concrete line has both length and breadth, whereas the real or abstract line has the dimension of length alone. But these facts in no wise detract from the value of the mental discipline and development which may be attained by the faithful student who uses these symbols as if they were the real figures which are in his mind, although the knowledge of objective facts that he gains is almost infinitesimal.

And what we have said in regard to the study of Geometry is true in some measure of all studies whatsoever. That knowledge is always of most worth to us which is acquired by the highest exercise of our faculties. The scholarship which consists in an accumulation of facts

without a corresponding expansion of mind and soul does not deserve the name of scholarship.

It is possible for us to obtain a knowledge of the law of gravitation — that all material bodies attract one another with a force that is in direct proportion to their mass of matter and in inverse proportion to the squares of their distances— with no more enlargement of our mental faculties than we can obtain by reading some interesting item in a daily newspaper; but how the soul of Isaac Newton must have risen to the skies when he made this grand discovery; for it was not revealed to him until he had long sat at the feet of Nature and became acquainted with her very soul.

Any one who is versed in Arithmetic may learn Kepler's laws of planetary motion with no perceptible increase of his mental stature; but it is said that when after many years of study and investigation, these laws became fully established in Kepler's mind, such was his rapture of feeling that he exclaimed, "O God, I have been thinking Thy thoughts!"

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE HIGH ART OF TEACHING.

The improved "methods" and other improvements in the theory and practice of teaching for which our age is so justly distinguished are far enough from perfection, and are far from marking as great progress in the educational world as is claimed for them; but out of them all has come—and this we must consider their chief virtue—a recognition of the fact that the living teacher is greater than all methods and systems of instruction—yea, greater than all sciences! The teacher who is indeed "up" in his profession is not only provided with a good store of knowledge, but he makes all facts and all sciences contribute to the edification of himself and his pupils; he transforms "dead languages" into living ones; he creates such an atmosphere about him that whatever knowledge he imparts becomes noble and inspiring and therefore "practical" in the highest sense. Such a teacher ever realizes that he cannot separate his personality from his instruction; and since he must *impress himself* (his character) on his pupils, he realizes that he

is bound not only to present to them a character without spot or blemish, but as far as possible to make himself "persona grata" to all of them. Is it not desirable that children should love the man or woman who teaches them as well as the instruction they receive?

While the true teacher remembers that his pupils are the subjects of his authority and instruction, he also remembers that they are his fellow-beings as well as his pupils; and therefore he ever seeks to establish a friendly—and off-duty—acquaintance with them, to the end that he may know all sides of their characters, may know them as persons as well as pupils, and to the end that teacher and pupils may like and respect each other and may constantly learn from each other!

"If any one can communicate himself, he can teach, but not by words. There is no teaching until the pupil is brought into the same state or principle in which you are; a transfusion takes place; he is you, and you are he; then is a teaching, and by no unfriendly chance or bad company can he quite lose the benefit."

Is it not time that this personal acquaintance and *attachment* between teacher and pupils should be recognized by normal educators and writers on Pedagogy as an essential feature of the

teacher's art? (If any considerable number of them do so recognize it we are not aware of the fact.)

If good teaching means "character-building" as well as giving instruction, does not the teacher need to know the children whom he teaches, and be known of them as certainly as the preacher needs to know the people to whom he preaches and be known of them? If mutual acquaintance and cordial sympathy is so desirable between parents and children, is it not equally desirable between teachers and pupils? And should not all teachers therefore beware of the leaven of officialism and ever cherish the leaven of sympathy and companionship?

Thus speaks the author of "The Simple Life" on this point: "Let us make an effort to brighten the morning of our children's days. Let us call in our sons whom our gloomy interiors send out into the street and our daughters moping in dismal solitude. Let us raise good humor to the height of an institution. Let the schools, too, do their part. Let teachers and pupils meet together oftener for amusement; it will be so much the better for serious work. There is no such aid to understanding one's teacher as to have laughed in his or her company; and conversely, to be well known and understood a pupil

must be met elsewhere than in recitation and examination."

Prof. Charles Northend has this to say concerning the teacher's interest in the amusements of his pupils: "By manifesting a judicious interest in the recreations of his pupils and exhibiting a true sympathy with them in their daily lives, the teacher may enlist their feelings in favor of school duties. Let every teacher aim to cultivate in children a taste for those recreations which are not only innocent in themselves, but harmless in their tendency. Let him give a smiling countenance and an approving expression to all such amusements and thus give evidence that he sympathizes with his pupils and takes pleasure in their enjoyments."

To this it might be added that it would be well for the teacher to participate in the amusements of his pupils more or less—if he can do so without spoiling their fun!

Breathes there a teacher under the sun whose "dignity" would suffer from such a cordial relation with his pupils as we are advocating?

Rather would not such a relation both enlarge the soul of every teacher and make his work much easier and more useful than it would otherwise be?

And would it be possible for any real teacher to become "too familiar" with his or her pupils or too well acquainted with them? If such a thing is really possible, it only happens once in a thousand years!

We believe no one has ever claimed that parents and children can be too friendly and familiar with each other.

Let us repeat then, that true teaching is far more than the conveying of instruction from one person to another. It is the contact of mind with mind, of thought with thought, of feeling with feeling, of life with life, of soul with soul.

. And as a current of electricity can not be generated without the action of both a positive and a negative pole, neither can the highest and best work of any teacher be performed, unless his pupils are made partakers and factors of his work and unless he strives to become like them as well to have them become like him.

"At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

"And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,

"And said, Verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven!"

Thus sang the poet Longfellow:

"Come to me, O ye children!  
For I hear you at your play;  
And the questions that perplexed me  
Have vanished quite away.

"Ah, what would the world be to us,  
If the children were no more?  
We should dread the desert behind us  
Worse than the darkness before!

"Come to me, O ye children!  
And whisper in my ear  
What the birds and the winds are singing  
In your sunny atmosphere.

"For what are all our contrivings  
And the wisdom of our books,  
When compared with your caresses  
And the gladness of your looks.

"Ye are better than all the ballads  
That ever were sung or said;  
For ye are living poems,  
And all the rest are dead!"

## CHAPTER VIII.

CONCERNING MEDICAL PRACTICE — WITH SOME  
REMARKS ON “CHRISTIAN SCIENCE” AND  
KINDRED SYSTEMS.

The medical profession have not yet eliminated disease from the world nor outgrown the current superstition that the maladies of our bodies can be cured with poisonous drugs; but we can hardly overestimate the healing power exercised by the members of this profession when they appreciate the virtue of “suggestion” and possess the personal magnetism which inspires their patients with hope and confidence. The time would fail us to tell how many cases of disease they cure in this way — in spite of their remedies! Much might also be said of the indirect or symbolic virtue of *materia medica* as a means of securing that mysterious influence over sick people’s imaginations—and nerves—which is so essential to the physician’s usefulness.

May we not hope that in the near future all medical practitioners will become prophets of health and heralds of the light and knowledge which the people so sadly need? Let us hope that the day is not far distant when they will

realize that Nature's remedies for the diseases of our flesh are abundance of light and pure air, the liberal use of water, a moderate and proper diet, and a firm *belief* that we are all children of health, and not children of disease!

But they will never become the prophets and heralds that we hope to see them as long as they adhere to the *system* of administering substances that are foreign to the human organism and give so little attention to the remedies which Nature has provided for us almost without money and without price. They will never become such heralds and prophets, until they realize that as most diseases can be traced to the lack of proper digestion, so they can only be cured through the process of digestion and assimilation, and until they realize that disordered and enfeebled stomachs do not need drugging and "dosing," but *rest* and care and protection. Such stomachs need protection from over-eating and from all preparations of food that excite an abnormal appetite. They need protection from alcoholic stimulants, from draughts of ice water, and from the thousand and one "laxatives," "purgatives" and "tonics" — and various "proprietary medicines" whose chief ingredient is bad whisky — that play such mischief with peoples' nerves and digestive organs, and keep an army of physicians

busy prescribing for them at all hours of the day and night.

O, that all physicians would teach their patients to sit down at the feet of Mother Nature and observe all the laws, physical and mental, which she has established for our health and healing. What miracles of healing they might then perform. How easy it would then be to "stamp out" smallpox, scarlet fever and the other contagious devils that afflict the people so sorely!

In this connection let us remark that we doubt whether any physician can do his best work and render his largest possible service to his fellow-men, if he is eager and determined to become rich from the practice of his profession. Should not the motives and purposes of the physical healer be as altruistic as those of the moral and spiritual healer?

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What shall we here say concerning "Christian Science," "Mental Science" and the various "Faith Cures" now in vogue that are seeking to heal all our diseases without the use of medicine or any "material" remedies? In spite of the many inconsistencies and contradictions and logical "ad-absurdums" of these various schools, do they not all represent the power of the subjective

over the objective and of the mental and spiritual over the material? For this reason we must welcome their appearance, believing that as the exponents of so vital a principle they can not fail to promote the physical health of the people and exert a more or less beneficial influence on our moral and social life — in spite of the *perversions* which may attach to them. Although most of the claims made by these systems will not stand the test of inductive experiment or of logical analysis, so long as they remain true to the principle of which we have spoken, we must consider them not far from the kingdom of truth. We need not believe that there is no material world, or that our minds can overcome the essential conditions under which we live, or that “miraculous” power can be invoked for the healing of our diseases; but we can very rationally hold that the power of mind over matter has never been fully measured, and that until the limits of this power are discovered, no one can tell how great an influence our wills may exercise over our imaginations and nerves and through these over the circulation of our blood. Says Shakespeare:

“When the mind is quickened, out of doubt,  
The organs, though defunct and dead before,  
Break up their drowsy grave, and newly move  
With casted slough and fresh legerity.”

Because *all* diseases can not be cured through mental or moral processes, let us not conclude that such processes have no place in the healing art. At any rate we may hold fast to the belief that good health is our normal possession, and is worth striving after with all the powers of our minds, bodies and souls.

The votaries of these systems will become more consistent and intelligent by and by. In due time they will learn that we can not make friends with Nature without respecting the physical senses she has given us as well as our mental and moral faculties. In due time they must needs recognize the fact that as most diseases are caused by the transgression of physical laws as well as by the failure of people to keep their mind and thoughts under proper discipline, so the prevention and cure of disease require a healthy state of mind *and* the observance of all the laws pertaining to our physical organization. They must needs modify their creeds so as to teach the importance of proper cleansing and breathing and eating and drinking and working and sleeping as well as thinking.

Meantime let them spread their gospel of good health as far and wide as they please. It won't harm anybody!

## CHAPTER IX.

## ARE ALL MEN CREATED EQUAL?

We Americans never grow weary of repeating the preamble to our Declaration of Independence, which declares that "all men are created equal," and we justly honor the fathers of our Republic who proclaimed this doctrine in the ears of mankind, but how far is it sustained by the objective facts in the case? All men are not born equal in respect to natural capacity, or property, or opportunities for action, or educational advantages, or even in respect to moral and religious privileges; and we think it would be very hard, if not impossible, to name any respect in which they actually come into the world on an equal basis. Our immortal Declaration of Independence will not hold good in the light of objective fact; but let us not conclude that it will be found wanting when tried by a higher and more vital test.

For as an *ideal principle* the statement that "all men are created equal" belongs to the highest order of truth. Not only was our government solemnly "dedicated" to this principle — see Lincoln's Gettysburg address — but it is a principle

which should pervade all our legislation and the administration of all our political, social and religious institutions. And wherever on land or sea our flag is raised, this principle should be inscribed on its folds, to be read and *believed* by all the nations of the earth. For verily this truth has come down to us from God out of heaven; and we should guard it as sacredly as the children of Israel ever guarded the ark of their covenant.

Only by cherishing this sentiment in our breasts and giving it the largest possible application can we hope to overcome the evil tendencies of officialism and commercialism and militarism. Let the officers of our army and navy learn that their blood is in no wise superior to that of the men under their command; let our landlords and other capitalists learn that although they are permitted to enjoy and control the products of other people's labor, those other people are creatures of the same flesh and blood as themselves; let all civil officials learn that they are the servants, not the masters or superiors of the public; let the principle of equality be taught in our schools and churches and at our firesides, and let no one dare to assert that the Golden Rule can not be applied to "business" or to "practical politics."

When we reflect that in this favored land of

ours we already have our millionaires and multi-millionaires and bid fair to have our billionaires and multi-billionaires in the near future — that the wealth of the country is concentrating in the hands of a few “captains of industry” with the most frightful rapidity — that political platforms and nominations for public offices are dictated by party “bosses” great and small — that trusts and combines are controlling the larger portion of our commercial enterprises and are certainly seeking the control of all elections and all legislation — we can not be free from misgivings concerning the application of this principle in the years that are to come. But let us not despair of the Republic; for verily the souls of Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln shall go marching on, and “government of the people, by the people and for the people shall not perish from the earth!”

“What constitutes a state?  
 Not high-raised battlement or labored mound,  
 Thick wall or moated gate;  
 Not cities proud with spires and turrets crowned;  
 Not bays and broad-armed ports,  
 Where, laughing at the storm, rich navies ride;  
 No — men, high-minded *men!*

\* \* \* \*

These constitute a state!”

## CHAPTER X.

### CERTAIN ILLUSIONS AND THEIR USES AND PURPOSES.

The illusions, physical and psychological, to which mankind are subject may not be as numerous as the sands on the seashore; but it would require many volumes to recount and describe them all.

Let us look at some of the most general illusions pertaining to human life:

1. The desire to acquire material wealth is so nearly universal that we may pronounce it instinctive; and no small fraction of mankind are seeking the gratification of this desire with hope and confidence. But how few of them are succeeding in their object; and in the nature of the case how impossible it is for all of them to succeed.

Is not commercial life as essential a conflict as is military life?

Let us suppose that the capacity of all persons in respect to this object were the same, and that there was no difference in the conditions under which they entered the contest — would we not see the failure of all and the success of

none? Or let us even suppose that all people would determine to save a substantial fraction of their incomes — would not business of all kinds be speedily paralyzed? Is it not an essential condition of general prosperity that the body of the people will spend all they earn?

However earnestly we may deprecate the accumulation of great fortunes, we must not close our eyes to the fact that the success of the few is a stimulus and inspiration to the many, and that the activity of the many makes for civilization and social progress. When Patrick Henry said, "It is natural for man to indulge in the illusions of hope," he might have added that human progress is largely promoted by these illusions.

But what a lesson is here, not merely for the Rockefellers and Goulds and Morgans and Vanderbilts, but for all persons who may be counted successful in their pursuit of wealth. If those who fail in this pursuit need to realize that life does not consist in financial success, and that the highest order of manhood may be developed and sustained amid the very ashes of poverty and evil fortune, how much more should the successful ones realize that all their wealth — except the small fraction of it which they themselves have actually produced — has come out of the labor and sweat and failures and misfortunes of

other people! How easy it is for any one to "make money" when he can appropriate to himself the first-fruits of the labor of hundreds and thousands of his fellow-men!

Will rich people ever learn the lesson of humility and obligation which these facts suggest to them? They surely ought to learn that their wealth — no matter how it has been acquired — *is not their own*, and that they must make themselves the stewards and servants of society. if their "success" is to be essentially profitable to themselves or to their children and children's children.

2. Do not all persons, from the child in the cradle to the old man or woman trembling on the edge of the grave desire *freedom* of every kind? And are we not all striving to secure the largest possible measure of it? Do we not also believe that without the enjoyment of freedom our lives would not be worth living?

There is something about Law of every kind that galls and oppresses us. If we were conscious of the law of gravitation every moment, our lives would be unendurable. Is not our instinctive love of locomotion due in some measure to our desire to escape the consciousness of our subjection to this law and make-believe that we can overcome it? There is something more than

the idea of utility in the trolley car and the steam car and steamship — and also in the air ship in which we expect to travel around the world in the future. How earnestly we all desire both to be free and to feel free? And yet how little actual objective freedom we can secure for ourselves. It would almost seem that the *sense* of freedom is all that is vouchsafed us.

But let us not conclude on this account that Nature is mocking us withal; for here as elsewhere we may see the marks of her great love and wisdom. The lesson for us to learn is that all our freedom must be *lawful* freedom, and that only by a proper recognition of the laws to which we are subject and a cheerful submission to them can we make our freedom of any value to us. Even our sense of freedom must be united with a sense of duty and obligation.

3. The blue canopy over our heads that we call the sky, and whose beauty we never cease to admire, may be taken as an illustration of that gilded canvas of the future which Nature spreads before our eyes — for what purpose? Manifestly that she may inspire us with hope and impart to us such activity of mind and body as will make it worth while for us to live. How unspeakably sad must any one's life be who can see no vision of brighter days and hours than he now enjoys!

And what would become of our agriculture and commerce and governments and social and religious institutions, if we could no longer believe or make-believe that by our mental and physical exertions and the changes we are permitted to make in external conditions, we can essentially increase our happiness and well-being? How soon would the human races perish from the earth, if this blessed illusion were entirely dispelled from our minds! Nay, it is not all illusion!

4. And what shall we say concerning the desire and hope that burns in so many breasts — called by Henry George “the passion of passions and hope of hopes” — that we may leave the world better than we found it, even if we can not remove from it all the evils to which our race is subject? Ah, this problem of evil — must it remain with us forever and a day? Is there to be no end to the meanness and misery and moral degradation that yet remain in the earth, in spite of all the reforms and evolutions that mark the history of our race? Shall we ever see the “golden age” of the philosophers or the “millenium” of Christian sages and prophets?

There is no answer to these questions except such answer as each one of us may find for himself — and *in himself*! Each one of us must

learn not only that the knowledge of good and evil — see Genesis III: 5 — makes us like the gods, but that only by the comprehension and mastery of evil — by wrestling with it and overcoming it — can we prove ourselves worthy of the natures with which we are endowed.

Meantime let us see to it that this trial of our faith worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and that our hope maketh us not ashamed. Whatever be our view of the evil now existing in the world, let us ever look for brighter days to come, even as we look for the rising sun every morning. Let us not put away our heavenly vision of the future or prove disobedient unto it; for verily —

“Truth crushed to earth shall rise again;  
The eternal years of God are hers;  
But Error wounded writhes with pain,  
And dies among his worshipers!”

And in the words of the poet Lowell:

“Truth forever on the scaffold,  
Wrong forever on the throne!  
But that scaffold sways the future;  
And behind the dim unknown  
Standeth God within the shadow,  
Keeping watch above his own!”

## CHAPTER XI.

## CONCERNING THE WORLD'S PHILOSOPHIES.

We have already stated that there is very little actual or objective knowledge to be gained from the study of the world's philosophies; but let us not therefore conclude that they are all fruitless abstractions or vain speculations concerning the things that can not be known, or that they are wholly unsuited to our practical life. While these philosophies have failed to pierce the recesses of the human soul as signally as physical science has failed to solve the mysteries of the material world, it would be impossible to estimate the activity of mind and the development of human faculties which they have promoted as well as the influence they have exerted on the political, social and religious institutions of the world.

In opposition to those writers who claim that the various systems of philosophy bore no *fruit* — see Macaulay's essay on Bacon — until Bacon and his inductive method appeared, we need only quote what James Freeman Clarke in his "Ten Great Religions" says concerning ancient Greece,

which was certainly the cradle of ancient philosophy, if not of modern philosophy as well:

“Nowhere in the earth before or since has man been educated into such a wonderful perfection, such an entire unfolding of himself as in Greece. There every human tendency and faculty of soul and body opened in symmetrical proportion. That small country, so insignificant on the map of Europe, almost invisible on the map of the world, carried human art to perfection in a few short centuries. Everything in Greece was artistic, because everything was finished and perfected. In that garden of the world ripened the masterpieces of poetry and the masterpieces of history, of oratory, of mathematics, of architecture, of sculpture, and of painting. Greece developed every form of human government; and in Greece were fought and won the great battles of the world. Before Greece everything in literature and art was a rude and imperfect attempt; since Greece everything has been a rude and imperfect imitation.”

It can not be maintained that the high civilization of Greece was wholly due to the speculations and discussions of her philosophers, but surely philosophy was one of the most vital factors in that civilization. A history of Greece with no account of Socrates and Plato and Aristotle with

their predecessors and followers would be very much like the play of Hamlet with Hamlet left out.

“The progress of philosophy from Thales to Plato,” says Dr. John Lord, “is the most stupendous triumph of the human intellect. The reason of man soared to the loftiest heights it has ever attained. It cast its searching eye into the most abstruse inquiries which ever tasked the human mind, and exhausted all the subjects which dialectical subtlety ever raised. Who can not see in the inquiries and dialectics of the old philosophers a magnificent triumph of human genius, such as has been exhibited in no other department of human science? If any intellectual pursuit has gone round in perpetual circles apparently incapable of progression or rest, it is that glorious study of philosophy, which has tasked the mightiest intellects of the world and which, progressive or not, will never be relinquished without the loss of that which is most valuable in human culture.”

That modern philosophy has exerted an equally beneficial influence on modern civilization will not be questioned by any one familiar with modern history. Are not philosophical speculation and scientific investigation as vitally related as the Siamese twins?

## CHAPTER XII.

## CONCERNING MORALITY.

The moral codes and systems of the world have not escaped the imperfection which belongs to all things human; but let us rejoice that the rules of our conduct can not be made so precise and definite that he who runneth may always read and understand them. For if all our conduct were definitely prescribed for us, we would cease to be moral beings, if we did not cease to be intelligent ones. Moral science, above all other sciences, is subjective. The highest morality can only be attained when we *choose and prefer* the right with motives that are altogether righteous; and in all cases it is desirable that we should see the right course with our own eyes. It would be "proving too much" to maintain that in respect to his moral conduct every man should be a law unto himself; but we do insist that there should be a wide range of freedom and discretion for each individual — else reason and conscience would both be stifled. As no one could become a rapid and graceful walker whose steps were all according to a strict mathematical measurement,

so no one could become truly moral by merely believing some code of morals or strictly following some prescribed course of conduct. True morality, we might say, does not consist in walking on a single straight line, but in keeping the proper balance between two lines, the one on the right and the other on the left. And we must not only learn to walk in this manner, but also learn how and when and where to draw the lines.

In vain shall we seek for a definite and absolute line of distinction between right and wrong, so that we may distinguish the one from the other, as a chemist distinguishes the compounds in his laboratory; but we shall not seek in vain for that *sense* of right and wrong, that divine law which has been written on the tables of our hearts and made a part of our inmost natures.

Here, we fear, we must join issue with those philosophers who make the "data of ethics" to consist in our experience of those acts which give pleasure or pain to ourselves and others, thus representing our moral ideas as somewhat extraneous to our natures, instead of tracing them to the heart of our being. Especially do they ignore or seem to ignore the law or principle of self-discipline without which there can be no moral character and hardly any moral conduct.

It is in fulfilling this law of self-discipline that we find the high office of our reason and conscience, which office we can not fail to recognize without doing ourselves the most serious injury and grieving that Spirit of Truth in which we have our moral being.

And, paradoxical as it may seem, when we most faithfully discipline ourselves, we feel the greater need of "the Power not ourselves that makes for righteousness," and open our eyes to that light which is for every man that cometh into the world.

"Work out your own salvation — for it is God that worketh in you," wrote St. Paul to the Philippians.

"My Father worketh hitherto — and I work," said Jesus the Christ.

We will not contend that our reason and conscience are "infallible" in the full sense of that term; but they are certainly the guides which Heaven has given us, and according to the highest principles of our nature we must be directed by them as certainly as our bodily actions have to be directed by our eyesight and other senses.

All moral codes and rules and "commandments" must pass through the crucible of our reason that we may determine their virtue and applicability by whatever process we deem most reliable.

"Try the spirits, whether they be of God," says the Apostle John.

"He who would gather immortal palms," says Emerson, "must not be hindered by the name of goodness, but must explore it if it be goodness. In the last analysis nothing is sacred but the integrity of our own mind."

The essence of morality is as impossible of definition as the essence of life itself; but each one of us must imbibe that essence before the seal of true morality can be stamped on our foreheads. It may even be possible for any one to keep all the commandments of the law and yet lack the inward principle or germ which is found in every truly moral character.

A catalogue of all the virtues possessed by Abraham Lincoln would give us no adequate idea of his character; for the soul of goodness that was in him defies analysis or definition. And what is true concerning Lincoln is true concerning all other good men and women, saying nothing about the goodness which we would fain believe is to be found in all persons whatsoever.

And even if it were possible to reduce the principles of morality to definite and fixed rules; we would still find those rules crossing each other at right angles and not infrequently meeting in direct conflict, so that reason would still have to

be exercised in harmonizing and applying them. We are not here speaking of questions in mere casuistry — whose name is legion — but of those direct, practical questions which come to us in our every day life and appeal to the clearest moral sense that is in us. And the more complex human society becomes and the higher civilization we attain, the more numerous will be the questions that cannot be answered correctly, unless our moral sense is honored as it should be. Where there is no *vision* the people perish!

Hence the importance of our cherishing the highest moral ideals and having within us that principle or soul of truth, which no man can define, but which all men recognize when it finds its proper expression in our words and deeds.

The man who possesses this principle as a part of his nature may not be able to transmute all the falsehood and error that he finds into truth or all the evil he finds into good; but he and he alone can *see* the soul of truth in things erroneous and the soul of good in things evil. Such a man can transfigure the world in which he lives with the light of his own soul and make it — to himself — a moral and spiritual world; he can subdue the very powers of Nature and press them into the service of his moral being; he can cause the ground under his feet to be firmer and

more abiding, and the stars above his head to shine with a brighter light.

These points, we think, are worthy of serious consideration in teaching morality to others — and are especially important in teaching it to children. It is very easy to recite the “Ten Commandments” and other moral maxims to children, and when we have sufficient authority over them, we can compel good behavior on their part; but if we want to instil moral principles into their natures, we must bring their moral faculties into exercise. This we consider as certain a fact as that we can not teach them to walk without exercising their bones and muscles or to think without exercising their mental faculties.

To teach morality to children, then, we must not only inspire them with such a love of the right that they will choose and prefer it, but we must quicken their moral powers, so they will be able to see the right path with their own eyes. We must educate — lead forth — their moral sense. We need hardly add that no one can teach morality to others, unless his own moral sense is pure and clear and *active* — “for if the blind lead the blind, they both shall fall into the ditch.”

Does this argument unduly emphasize the subjective side of morality and righteousness?

## CHAPTER XIII.

THE MYSTERIES OF RELIGION — BUT MAN HAS A  
RELIGIOUS NATURE.

Shall we dare to enter the temple of Religion and inquire what light she can throw on our subject? Here we not only find that language is inadequate to the expression of our thoughts, but that it is well-nigh impossible to distinguish between what we know on the one hand and what we think or feel or believe or desire on the other. When we seek to penetrate the counsels of Infinity and to solve the mysteries of the eternity behind us and the eternity before us as well as the mysteries of our present being, how little there is for us to *know*, and how much to believe, to admire, to reverence and adore! Surely in the presence of these mysteries, it is not the assurance of knowledge that we need most, but the open mind, the bowed head, the pure and honest heart!

On the other hand, let us remember—and here is a point on which too much emphasis can hardly be laid—that man has a religious nature which demands to be exercised as certainly as his body and mind cry out for the exercise and aliment

they need. As our eyes can not be satisfied with the beauties and glories of the earth, but must be raised to the skies and the stars, so this religious nature of ours ever desires and seeks a knowledge of our relation to the Infinite Power which has created the heavens and the earth.

In his most admirable work entitled, "First Principles," Herbert Spencer has pointed out that Religion and Science have an everlasting basis of harmony in the mystery of the universe because no theory that has ever been devised to account for its origin is even conceivable. All of which is very true; but it seems to us that our great philosopher might have gone still further and shown that the religious nature of man is a foundation on which Religion can ever stand with the fullest assurance, and a *fact* which science must ever recognize as certainly as she recognizes the law of gravitation.

We may have to concede that the *essence* of the Power that animates and controls the universe is unknown and unknowable; but although we can not claim the perfect knowledge which we desire, that *principle of belief*—which is a part of our nature as certainly as is our eyesight or any other sense or faculty—asserts itself, and we demand the high privilege of *faith* and love and worship.

Is it not as necessary for human beings to *believe something* as it is for them to eat something? Would not the absence of all belief in our breasts be as fatal to our progress and development as the absence of all knowledge would be? In all the affairs of life do we not have to walk by faith as well as by sight?

When Martin Luther made "justification by faith" the keynote of the Protestant Reformation, he not only proclaimed a fundamental doctrine of the New Testament, but a fundamental principle of human nature.

"Lord, I believe—help thou mine unbelief," has been the cry of many and many a soul through all the ages.

How exceedingly unscientific and unphilosophical must we consider the late Col. Ingersoll and other "Agnostics," who denounce all religious faith as "superstition," while they ignore this fundamental principle of our nature and the vital need of its exercise.

Equally unscientific and unphilosophical must we consider all religious teachers who can see no virtue in any creed or belief unless it is in strict accordance with objective facts. Since we can not obtain absolute knowledge of any thing whatever, and since even our relative knowledge is so exceedingly narrow, and since the greater

part of this relative knowledge has been obtained by cherishing erroneous hypotheses, our beliefs concerning things unseen and unknown may surely accord with the principles of our nature whether they are sustained by objective facts or not. And since we must work out our salvation with such imperfect knowledge, our beliefs can certainly be made valuable to us without being free from all mistakes or errors in respect to fact. We need not be—we can not be—as gods in respect to our beliefs any more than in respect to our knowledge.

But while it is not essential that our beliefs should be infallible or “inerrant” in point of fact, it is essential that we should be very honest in our devotion to them and very careful concerning their influence on our characters; for verily, it is *how* we believe rather than what we believe that makes us children of the truth and the light.

We cannot share in the *sentiment* manifested in the statement of the historian Gibbon, that in the early years of the Roman empire “all modes of worship were considered equally true by the people, equally false by the philosopher and equally useful by the magistrate;” but we do assert that the vital truth of all religions and religious creeds does not so much depend on their

correspondence with objective facts as on their correspondence with the principles of human nature and their adaptation to the wants of the people by whom they are cherished and professed. That religion is most true and most divine which ministers in largest measure to the reason and intelligence and manifold aspirations of the human soul. Only by this sign can we know that any religion is a message from Heaven and that its teachers are prophets of the Lord Most High!

## CHAPTER XIV.

## CONCERNING THE WORLD'S VARIOUS RELIGIONS

An examination of the different religions of the world, we think, would reveal the fact that they all *have their roots in human nature*, and that their propagation and development are due to the vital relation which exists between their fundamental tenets and the life of our race, political, moral and social. This statement might seem to be disproved by the fact that there has always been such a diversity of religions, and that all efforts to establish a universal religion have signally failed. But when we remember that there have always been nations and nations and peoples and peoples as well as religions and religions, and that these religions all represent in some measure the desires and aspirations of the "genus homo," the natural or human basis that we have claimed for them is only made more certain. Nay; the specific or differentiating features of each religion sustain our point by their special adaptation to the nation or people where that religion prevails. We might even go so far as to claim that each one of these religions is as

nearly perfect a system of faith and practice as its adherents can assimilate.

Let no one think, then, because there have always been so many religions with conflicting claims and doctrines that all religions are cunningly devised fables or mere inventions of their founders. Rather, let us count them all as cries of the human soul for more light concerning the secrets of its being and its relation to "the One who is the All." Or let us count them as efforts of the soul to find expression and exercise for that principle of belief which is such a fundamental element of its nature. We may at least regard all religions as products of human evolution and essential elements of civilization and social order—unless all history is false. And because they are all so natural, they must be more or less supernatural; because they are all so human, they must be more or less divine!

But while religious creeds and systems are both factors and exponents of civilization, none of them bears the stamp of completeness or absolute perfection.

And although some of them have withstood the wear and tear of many centuries, we must look on them all as subject to that unceasing process of change which we find in the material

world from the smallest atom to the solar system itself.

Religious creeds, at best, are only symbols or outlines of truth; and being clothed in imperfect human language, we need not wonder that the human mind outgrows them, and that the vital truth which they contain at length refuses to be confined within the narrow shell which surrounds it. Says Tennyson:

“Our little systems have their day;  
They have their day, and cease to be:  
They are but broken lights of Thee;  
For thou, O Lord, art more than they!”

But the same poet has also sung:

“Yet I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs;  
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns!”

And even if it can not be shown that the various changes in religious creeds are signs of progress in all cases, the fact remains that the changes themselves are inevitable. In its revolution around the sun from year to year, the earth may make no essential progress in the heavens; but in the language of Galileo, “It still moves!”

No religious creed can claim a monopoly of the truth it embodies; for all vital religious

truth belongs to the race. Neither can any religion claim the right to speak the last word concerning any truth or principle; for the law of progress belongs to our religious life as certainly as it belongs to our social life. If Evolution is the universal law or principle that it is claimed to be, why should not all religions be included in its operations? Are they not all worthy to be counted as children of this kingdom?

“New occasions teach new duties,  
Time makes ancient good uncouth.  
They must onward still and upward  
Who would keep abreast of Truth!

“Lo, her camp-fires gleam before us,  
We ourselves must pilgrims be,  
Launch our Mayflower, and steer boldly  
Through the desperate, wintry sea;  
Nor attempt the future’s portal  
With the past’s blood-rusted key!”

No man can prophesy the modifications that will be made in Buddhism and Brahmanism and Confucianism and Shintoism and Mohammedanism — not mentioning Judaism and Christianity — during the twentieth century, if our present “strenuous life” continues until the year of our Lord two thousand.

In making these statements we have no desire to discount — rather we wish to emphasize — the virtue of all religious creeds as long as they are

*believed with the heart* and are the highest expressions of men's religious natures that they can find. Because the dwellings we now build are so superior to the log-cabins of our forefathers, it does not follow that those cabins were built — and lived in — in vain. Because in these days of the steamship and the steam car we can cross an ocean or a continent in so short a time, we need not forget how the stage-coach and the sailing-vessel were once such vital agencies of commerce and civilization.

## CHAPTER XV.

## THE SYMPATHY OF RELIGIONS — NOTWITHSTANDING THEIR VARIETY.

When the representatives of the world's various religions stood up at the opening of the "Parliament of Religions" in Chicago in the year 1893 and sang the doxology —

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow!"

they not only furnished us a beautiful and inspiring spectacle, but a most valuable object lesson. What further testimony do we need to show that on the one hand, all religions are imperfect, and on the other, that they all represent truths which are for the life and healing of the nations?

And in the proceedings of that Parliament the fact most clearly brought to light was not that the religions of the world present so many points of agreement in their formal tenets, but that they have a common aspiration after light and truth and wisdom and perfection of character. The Parliament closed without proof that any of the religions there represented must be considered a complete or exclusive message from heaven, but

not without proof that there is a "sympathy of religions" which shows them all to be the ministers and servants of human kind.

"Among all these structures of spiritual organization," says Colonel Higginson, "there is vital sympathy. It lies not in what they know; for they are all alike, in a scientific sense, in knowing nothing. Their point of sympathy lies in what they have sublimely *created* through longing imagination. In all these faiths there is the same alloy of human superstition, the same fables of miracle and prophecy, the same signs and wonders, the same successive births and resurrections. In point of knowledge they are all helpless; in point of credulity, they are all puerile; in point of aspiration they are all sublime. They all seek after God, if haply they might find him."

"Religion," says Prof. Tyndall, "belongs not to man's knowing powers, but to his *creative* powers."

It verily seems to us that if our foreign missionaries could all realize this sympathy or sympathy of religions, they might hope to secure an evolution of oriental faiths into something higher and better, whereas the "conversion of the heathen" to Christianity is a long way off, to say the least.

It might seem very desirable that all the na-

tions of the orient and the "islands of the sea" should relinquish their "idolatry" and accept the Christian faith; but O, the centuries — rather the millenniums — that would be required for the necessary process of assimilation. And pray what would the people all believe while the transition from one faith to the other was in progress?

No doubt many Protestants would desire to see all Catholics converted to their form of Christianity — we will not here stop to inquire how long it would take to evolve the average Catholic into a consistent Protestant — and the union of all Protestant sects under one organization and form of worship; but such a consummation would not only be contrary to the *variety* which is a fundamental principle of human nature, but we fear it would crucify religion itself by robbing it of that subjective element which is the life of its life and the soul of its soul.

Why should we not have a variety of religious creeds as well as a variety of trees and leaves of trees? If any one is really puzzled over the existence of so many different creeds and forms of worship, let him ask the Creator why he has made so many different people and given them so many different kinds of "environment."

These considerations, above all else, should cause us to see the utter blindness and folly as well

as wickedness of all proscription or persecution on account of religious faith. When we remember that no two persons can receive the exact impression of any external object on the retina of their eyes, and that every star we behold in the heavens has its parallax — when we remember that spiritual things can only be seen with eyes of faith — can we not realize how impossible it is for all men to see alike in the spiritual realm? Nay, can we not realize that all sincere expressions of religious faith are worthy of our respect as well as our toleration and charity? We may not go as far as Dr. Horace Bushnell — we believe it was he — who said he could subscribe his name to any creed that was framed by devout and honest people; but we ought to have the highest respect for every form of religious faith that does not conflict with the rights of man or the public peace and order. Not only so; but if we are right in our position that it is necessary for mankind to believe something, it is always best that people should hold fast to the faith they have until they are prepared for something higher and better — even as it is best for the child to believe that the sun rises every morning, until his mind is prepared for the knowledge of the earth's daily rotation.

It is just as irrational for us to demand that

other people shall believe what we believe and adopt our manner of worship, as it would be to demand that they shall walk in our footprints or breathe our breath.

And even if it were the case, as we are so apt to think, that our particular creed is "the Truth" without any limitation or modification, we would still do well to recognize the principle laid down by John Stuart Mill in his "Essay on Liberty:"

"However unwillingly a person who has a strong opinion may admit the possibility of its being false, he ought to consider that however true it may be, if it is not fully, freely and frequently discussed, it will be held as a dead dogma, not a living truth!"

And surely there can be no real discussion of any religious creed without a proper respect for other creeds and modes of worship.

## CHAPTER XVI.

IS CATHOLICISM EVOLVING AS WELL AS  
PROTESTANTISM?

But a proper recognition of all the religions of the world need not prevent our appreciating the superior features of Christianity; and not the least of these features must we consider its capacity of development, which enables it to keep pace — at least partial pace — with the evolutions of science and philosophy for which our age is so highly distinguished.

This view might seem to be contradicted by the mere mention of the Roman Catholic church with its powerful hierarchy, its well-disciplined priesthood, and its claim that it permits no change in its theology or ritual and no modification of its authority over its members. But the Catholic church is only a part of Christendom; and with all our respect for its perfect order and organization and our recognition of the service it thereby renders to the bodies and souls of men, we are not certain that it can claim a perpetual lease of life, unless it learns the lesson of evolution.

May we not even assert that the germs of evolution have already been implanted in this most

venerable body? Are not its cardinals evolving more or less? — are not its bishops evolving more or less? — are not its priests evolving more or less? — are not its laity evolving more rather than less? It is impossible for us to think that there is no leaven of “advanced thought” in the breasts of the mighty host who comprise the membership of this church. Good Catholics may believe the *same things* that were believed by their fathers and grandfathers; but the tone and color of their belief are very much changed — unless we are very much mistaken.

Let it not be thought, however, that we have set out to prophesy the decay or dissolution of this mighty organization. On the contrary, we believe it will live and flourish as long as men need — or think they need — its Infallible Pope, its Apostolic priesthood, its Latin liturgy, its confessional, its seven sacraments, its prayers for the dead, its parochial schools, its purgatorial fires and its authority over its communicants in all matters of faith and dogma. But the inner evolution of which we have spoken — this we think is as certain to continue as is the rising and setting of the sun.

And since Catholicism as it now exists may be traced to the combined influence of Judaism, primitive Christianity and Roman law — should

not Grecian philosophy also be included in this category? — we may safely prophesy that at the close of the twentieth century it will be a very different institution from what it now is.

The signs of evolution in that portion of Christendom called Protestant are too numerous to be questioned for a single moment. Here too the formal creeds and rites and ceremonies for the most part remain unchanged; but what a marvelous change—revolution it should rather be called—there has been in the actual teaching and preaching of the various Protestant churches during the last fifty or sixty years. What modifications Orthodoxy has undergone through the influence of “Unitarianism,” “Universalism,” “Swedenborgianism,” “Liberalism,” “Evolutionism,” and we had almost said “Agnosticism;” and the end is not yet—nor even the beginning of the end.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## MYSTERY OF THE DIVINE BEING.

There was a time within the memory of men still living, when all doubts concerning the personality of Deity were branded as "Atheism," but at the present time even men within the pale of orthodoxy are reverently inquiring whether the being of God is not too vast to be fully represented by such a symbol as that of personality; and so we are stretching the wings of our imagination and striving to compass within the limits of our understanding the Infinite Power, the Infinite Wisdom, the Infinite Goodness, the Infinite Presence and the Infinite Love. Is there no expansion of mind and soul in this process? Does it show a lack of piety and reverence to regard the Infinite Being as *more* than a person—provided we do not lose our sense of moral obligation? Verily, the loss of this sense is the only atheism we need fear.

On the one hand—as we shall see when we come to consider the doctrine of the Trinity—we can form no conception of Deity without the use of some symbol, and human personality is

the highest symbol within our reach, and on the other, we can not help realizing that this symbol is imperfect and inadequate. Hence we need not be shocked or alarmed at the evolution of our minds and the expansion of our thoughts in the consideration of this most stupendous question.

“And God said unto Moses, I am that I am!”

“And he said, Thou canst not see my face, for there shall no man see me and live!”

“Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?”

“God is a Spirit,” says the Westminster Catechism, “infinite, eternal and unchangeable in his being—wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth.”

“It is dangerous,” says Hooker, “for the feeble brain of man to wade far into the doings of the Most High, whom although to know be life, and joy to make mention of his name, yet our soundest knowledge is to know that we know Him not as indeed He is, neither can know Him, and our safest eloquence concerning him is our silence, whereby we confess without confession that His glory is inexplicable, and His greatness beyond our capacity and reach.”

“Of all points of faith,” says Cardinal Newman, “the being of God is accompanied with

most difficulty and borne in upon our minds with most power."

And thus John Fiske: "Indeed, no word or phrase that we may apply to Deity can be other than an extremely inadequate and unsatisfactory symbol."

And thus Ernest Renan: "Under one form or another, God will always stand for the full expression of our supersensual needs. He will ever be the category of the Ideal, the form under which things eternal and divine are conceived. The word may need to be interpreted in senses more and more refined, but it will never be superseded."

And thus the Russian poet, Derzhavin:

"O, thou Eternal One whose presence bright  
All space doth occupy, all motion guide;  
Unchanged through Time's all-devastating flight!  
Thou only God — there is no God beside!  
Being above all beings, Mighty One,  
Whom none can comprehend and none explore;  
Who fills't existence with Thyself alone,  
Embracing all, supporting, ruling o'er;  
Being whom we call God, and know no more!"

## CHAPTER XVIII.

“AND WHAT PROFIT SHOULD WE HAVE, IF WE  
PRAY UNTO HIM?”

We have learned, it may be, that we can in no wise reverse the order of Nature or free ourselves from the operation of her laws by our prayers; but we have also learned that all prayer conceived in a submissive and righteous spirit will have its appropriate result and reward. So instead of believing that some of our prayers will be answered, we believe—we even know—that they will all be answered in accordance with the Infinite Wisdom and Goodness. Instead of believing—or hoping—that we can change the course of an all-wise Providence by our prayers, we strive to become the ministers and servants of that Providence. And instead of believing that some things are providential, we realize that they are all providential—as far as we make them so!

How close a relation there may be between our prayers and the “laws” of the universe to which we are subject, we do not know and we do not need to know; but as certainly as our bodies are vitally related to the material world,

our spirits are related to the Spirit that animates all Nature. Therefore it is the privilege of every son of earth to *learn for himself* how far his prayers are profitable to him and how close a relation he may sustain to the Infinite One, even as it is the privilege of the child to learn the value of its father's and mother's love. And as no one is prepared to deny the existence of God who has not traversed all the infinities of space, so no one can deny the efficacy of prayer who has not solved all the mysteries of life and learned all the secrets of the heavens and the earth.

And is not our searching after the heart of the Infinite and our communion with the Infinite not only a perfectly rational exercise, but the highest exercise of which we are capable?

"Prayer is the contemplation of the facts of life from the highest point of view; it is the soliloquy of a beholding and jubilant soul; it is the Spirit of God pronouncing His works good."

"Pray as Christ did," says Robertson, "until prayer makes you cease praying! Pray till you lose your own wish and merge it in the divine will. The divine Wisdom has given us prayer not as a means of obtaining the good things of earth, but as a means whereby we learn to do

without them, not as a means whereby we escape evil, but as a means whereby we become strong to meet and overcome it."

"Speak to him, thou, for he hears, and spirit with spirit  
may meet;  
Closer is he than breathing, and nearer than hands  
and feet!"

## CHAPTER XIX.

## THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY.

The formal doctrine of the Trinity as expressed in the Apostles' Creed would almost seem to have run its course; but its essential truth remains, for a purely abstract conception of Deity, even if we consider such a conception possible—will never satisfy us. He is, indeed, the Eternal Spirit that pervades the universe and dwells in the souls of men; but he is likewise the author (Father) of all life and phenomena, and we can never cease to symbolize and *humanize* him, while our nature remains as finite as it is.

The pious Mohammedan never tires of asserting that there is only one God; but—with his face toward Mecca—he must needs declare in the same breath that “Mohammed is his prophet.” How much of his soul’s adoration the average Mohammedan gives to the founder of his faith and how much to the one God we will not venture to say—we only know that Mohammedans are like the rest of mankind—they are very human!

Here is what Prof. Alexander Allen, in his “Continuity of Christian Thought” says concern-

ing the establishment of the doctrine we are now considering in the early Christian church :

“In the formula of Father, Son and Holy Ghost as three distinct and co-equal members in the one divine essence there was the recognition and the reconciliation of the philosophical schools which had divided the ancient world. In the idea of the Eternal Father, the oriental mind recognized what it liked to call the eternal abyss of being, the hidden mystery which lies back of all phenomena and lends awe to human minds seeking to know the truth. In the doctrine of the Eternal Son revealing the Father immanent in Nature and humanity as the life and light shining through all created things, the divine reason in which the human reason shares, there was the recognition of the truth after which Plato and Aristotle and the Stoics were struggling—the tie which binds the creation to God in the closest organic relationship. In the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, the church guarded against any pantheistic confusion of God with the world by upholding the life of the manifested Deity as essentially ethical or spiritual, revealing himself in humanity in its highest form only so far as humanity recognized its calling and through the Spirit entered into communion with the Father and the Son.”

It may be impossible for us to suppress a smile as we review the discussions of the "Homooou-sians" and the Homoiousians" of the fourth century on the question whether the natures of the Father and the Son are identical or only similar; but we would do well to remember not only that these men were discussing a question which they deemed one of vital importance, but that their discussions had a very important influence on the religious thought of their age and of subsequent ages — even down to the present century.

In speaking of the early triumphs of Christianity in the Roman empire Macaulay says: "God, the uncreated, the incomprehensible, the invisible, attracted few worshipers. A philosopher might admire so noble a conception; but the crowd turned away in disgust from words which presented no image to their minds. It was before Deity embodied in a human form, walking among men, partaking of their infirmities, leaning on their bosoms, weeping over their graves, slumbering in the manger and bleeding on the cross, that the prejudices of the synagogue and the doubts of the academy and the pride of the portico and the fasces of the lictor and the swords of thirty legions were humbled in the dust!"

This is a highly colored picture, but it brings

the *subjective truth* of the Incarnation into the clear light of day and indicates very distinctly that something akin to the doctrine of the Trinity will always be found in Christianity, if not in all the other religions of the world. We do not claim that the *triune* God will always be recognized and worshiped; but as long as the Supreme Power or Essence must always be conceived under the symbol of human personality — for there is no higher symbol — we may expect that even the most strenuous monotheists will always find more than one manifestation of Deity, if not more than one person in the godhead.

And even if the supernatural divinity of Jesus can not stand the analysis of science and logic, the human divinity or divine humanity which he so truly represented is the heritage of our race, and will always find manifestation and expression. Hence we may declare that in both the subjective and the objective sense the divine word (the *logos*) will always be made flesh, and divine men will always appear on the earth.

## CHAPTER XX.

## THE DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT.

There is a wide difference between the doctrine of the Atonement as formulated by Archbishop Anselm in the eleventh century and the same doctrine as preached and expounded at the present day; but although we can not *logically* recognize the "sacrifice of Christ" as the price or condition of our salvation, the principle of sacrifice, which is the essential truth involved in this doctrine is in no wise impaired, but is rather more firmly established in our minds. We certainly see more clearly that all Nature is full of sacrifice, and that only by applying this law to ourselves can we secure the at-one-ment with the Infinite which we desire. We also see that the willingness to serve our fellow-men and suffer for them, if need be, is one of the highest tests of manhood, and that only by such service and suffering can we secure the largest and noblest life for ourselves. While there is no tower of brick or stone on which we may climb to the skies, in the fulfillment of this law each soul may find for itself a Jacob's ladder on which the angels are ever ascending and de-

scending in their ministry of love and reconciliation.

The legal atmosphere in which this doctrine was conceived and the legal form in which it has come down to us have not prevented men from appreciating its soul of truth and the appeal which it makes to the inmost principles of our nature, but perhaps we have only begun to appreciate the high privilege which it suggests to all the sons of men. Its subjective truth reaches as high as our highest thought — yea, as high as heaven itself. Was not St. Peter thinking of our fulfillment of this law of sacrifice when he spoke of those promises whereby men may be made partakers of the divine nature?

Wherefore let us remember that it is not as mere beneficiaries of the Atonement, but as its prophets and exemplars that we are to commend its truth to the souls of our fellow-men.

The mystery of service and sacrifice is beyond our solution; but it is for us all to acquaint ourselves with this law and so fulfill it that men will be saved by our life, and by our death, if need be. We know not why John Brown should carry his hatred of slavery so far as to defy the constitution and laws of Virginia in the manner he did; but he surely saw the glory of the coming of the Lord while lying in his prison cell and while

dangling on the gallows. We can not understand why Abraham Lincoln should be killed by an assassin's bullet as soon as the triumph of the Union army was proclaimed to the world; but it was needful — this much we must believe — that his devotion to his country should be made perfect by the laying down of his life and that his message of justice and charity to mankind should be sealed with his blood. From these examples and thousands and thousands of others less distinguished, we may learn that the complete doctrine of the Atonement is not to be found in the record of a single sacrifice, but in the fulfillment of a fundamental law by all the sons of God who dwell on the earth.

Says O. B. Frothingham in his "Religion of Humanity:—"

"The narrative of the New Testament is sublime when read as the *legend of humanity*, the history of the moral nature in all individuals, the history of the human quality, the saving quality, in all mankind. \* \* The Christ of Humanity is the Saviour, the physician of men's bodies and souls. He cures our sicknesses, expels our demons and heals our infirmities. He restores sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf, he makes the lame walk, he cleanses the defiled, he quickens the dying, he raises the dead, he opens the prison-

house and gives liberty to the captives, he lightens the burdens that press on the poor and miserable. He has gone into the wilderness in search of stray sheep; he has pursued the moral leper into his desolated haunts among the graves; he has spent himself, worn himself out, literally died in poverty and outward wretchedness that the mission of brotherly love might be accomplished through him. He is the glorious company of the philosophers; he is the noble army of reformers and philanthropists; he is the holy band of the pure and wise in heart who counsel, warn, admonish and console the world.

“Between the Unsearchable One and imperfect beings this Christ of Humanity perpetually mediates, passing down to low places the light of regenerating influence and leading up weak and timid souls to the mountain top, where they see diviner forms and hear more celestial voices than come to them in their daily lives. This Christ touches both extremes; his earthly lot associates him with lowliness and poverty, while his character allies him with translated and immortal spirits. He eats with publicans and sinners, and communes with Moses and Elias. There is a stain on his mortal birth, but his home is in heaven.”

## CHAPTER XXI.

## OTHER CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES.

In the light of all the revelations of Geology and Astronomy, how innocent seems the belief that after the Almighty Power had created the heavens and the earth in six successive days and nights he “rested” for the space of one day, and that for this reason we are required to keep one day in seven holy in his sight; but in this belief is bound up a fundamental need of man’s moral and physical nature, which “the Sabbath” has supplied and still supplies in our behalf.

But at the same time, we know that “the Sabbath was made for man,” and is therefore to be observed with reason and intelligence; and since we have learned or are beginning to learn that all days are holy and all time is sacred, and that holy day and holiday can not be entirely separated — and ought not to be — there is no real occasion for alarm on account of the less strict observance of Sunday which appears to be a feature of our “progressive civilization” — provided no one is denied the *privilege* of using one

day in seven for rest and worship and all proper recreation.

“Total Depravity” as a distinct doctrine has been well-nigh eliminated from the actual creed of our churches; but we have not eliminated from human nature the weakness and blindness and *inclination to evil* that wreck so many lives and stand like giants in all our paths forbidding us to attain perfection of character to which we aspire. As long as this side of our nature remains with us — and who can claim to be free from it? — something akin to “conversion,” either as a definite and specific process or as a life-discipline or both, — will be needed by every soul of man.

What shall we say concerning that “Day of Judgment,” whose horrors once made such an impression on our minds and feelings? If we have ceased to believe in it, it is not because we have lost the distinction between righteousness and unrighteousness, or have cast off our fear of unrighteousness, but because we realize that we are always standing before “the judgment seat of Christ,” and are placing ourselves on his right hand or his left hand by the thoughts that we cherish and the acts that we perform. This is the judgment-day in which we have learned to believe from our

more subjective and more spiritual interpretation of the Scriptures and our more rational view of human responsibility. This is the judgment-day in which we *must* believe, because it is established in our hearts and consciences, if, indeed, it is not written on the face of the sky!

With the passing — we should rather say the spiritualizing — of our belief in the judgment-day, it must be noted that we no longer think of “Heaven” and “Hell” as *places* of reward and punishment. But surely there is no “decay of faith” in this; for we have learned to emphasize more fully the effect which every good act and every evil act must have on our characters. And if we are not quite prepared to say that there is no salvation except character, we are certain as certain can be that there is no salvation without character.

“The mind is own place, and in itself  
Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven!”

“I sent my soul through the Invisible,  
Some letter of that after-life to spell;  
And by and by my soul returned to me,  
And answered, ‘I myself am Heaven and Hell!’”

“Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they  
grind exceedingly small;  
Though with patience he stands waiting, with exact-  
ness grinds he all!”

“Whoso findeth me findeth Life — but he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul!” Infinite Wisdom is ever crying in our ears.

Moral degradation is a hell which no transgressor can hope to escape here or hereafter; and the more unconscious any one may be of such degradation, and the less pain he may suffer on account of it, the deeper is the hell in which he has placed himself.

It is certainly a serious reflection that with this change in our notion of future rewards and punishments, many people’s faith in immortality itself has greatly weakened; but let us take no alarm thereat. For on the one hand, the “sweet reasonableness” of our hope can ever be cherished in our breasts; and on the other, we may remember that the object of our lives is not to escape an eternity of suffering or secure an eternity of perfect bliss, but to fulfill the principles of our nature, whatever may be our portion after our earthly days and years are numbered. We shall never realize our own extinction — we shall never *know*, and we need not believe, that death will terminate our consciousness; — but whatever be the law or order in the case, it must be just and righteous altogether. Professor Huxley was not impious when he said, “It is well, if the sleep be endless.” And surely

Job of old was not impious when from the depths of his soul he cried, "If a man die, shall he live again?"

Neither was there impiety in the breast of Thomas Carlyle, when he waived the question of personal immortality and proclaimed the eternity of all *being* in words like these:

"Let us pierce through the time-element and glance into the Eternal. Let us believe that Time and Space are not God, but creations of God; that with God, as it is a universal Here, so it is an everlasting Now. Let us know of a truth, that only the time-shadows have perished or are perishable; that the real Being of whatever was, or is, or ever will be, *is now and forever*. \* \* \* Thus like a God-created, fire-breathing spirit-host we emerge from the Inane, haste stormfully across the astonished Earth, then plunge again into the Inane. Earth's mountains are leveled, and her seas are filled up in our passage — can the Earth, which is but a vision and is dead, resist Spirits which have Reality and are Alive? On the hardest adamant some footprint of us is stamped in; the last Rear of the host will read traces of the earliest Van; but whence? — O Heaven, whither? Sense knows not; Faith knows not; only that it is through Mystery to Mystery, from God and to God!"

And thus Ralph Waldo Emerson expresses himself on this point: "These questions which we lust to ask about the future are a confession of sin! God has no answer for them, for no answer in words can reply to a question of things. The only mode of obtaining an answer to these questions of the senses is to forego all low curiosity, and accepting the tide of being which floats us into the secret of nature, work and live, work and live, and all unawares the advancing soul has built and forged for itself a new condition, and the question and the answer are one."

Especially do we maintain that the motives of the future life are not essential to the cultivation of our religious natures and the practice of morality and righteousness. On the contrary, we insist that the present life furnishes motives sufficient unto the attainment of the highest moral excellence of which we are capable, if we can only appreciate them. What higher reward of virtue could we ask than virtue itself? Could even the Infinite Wisdom suggest a higher reward of righteousness than righteousness itself?

Is not the dogmatic belief in our personal immortality too egoistic to be altogether spiritual? Should we not rather set our hearts on that immortality of fragrant memory and beneficent in-

fluence which we may all leave behind us on the earth? Should we not be satisfied, if it so be that Truth and Justice and Righteousness shall abide forever? Will *we* not live as long as they live?

The ancient Jewish prophets were preachers of righteousness par excellence; yet they made no threats of future punishment and offered little or no reward beyond the present life.

## CHAPTER XXII.

## THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE.

But are not all these doctrines we have assumed to discuss clearly defined in the Scriptures and forever settled by their word of authority? Nay, verily; for waiving all questions concerning the agreement of the Scriptures and the creeds of the various churches, not only is it impossible to furnish a complete revelation of religious truth in the language of men, but no man has ever sounded the depths of Infinity in our behalf, so that he can speak to us with an authority beyond all question. So the Scripture itself must be brought into the high court of Reason, that we may determine how far it is applicable to us and how far it can profit us. The infallibility or "inerrancy" of the Bible can not be proven by miracles (even if the miracles themselves were proven), or by prophecies or by the "internal evidences" which were once deemed so conclusive; and the only authority it can possibly possess is the authority of the truths which it teaches and the light it sheds on those truths.

And is not the authority of Truth the highest possible authority?

And does not human freedom — the freedom of our reason and conscience — protest against an infallible book as truly as against an infallible church and an infallible Pope?

Thus we see that our Christianity, instead of being an ironclad “revelation” or *deposit* of absolute truth is a sort of “common law,” adapting itself to the progress of the age and thereby becoming a factor in that progress. Such a system has nothing to fear from the revelations of science or the speculations of philosophy; for it ever leans on the bosom of Truth and keeps its own hand on the pulses of the human soul!

What a divine interpreter it thus becomes!

## CHAPTER XXIII.

## THE FORMS OF RELIGION.

All that we have said in reference to the tenets and doctrines of Christianity and other religions might also be said in reference to their formal rites and ceremonies. That the forms of religion meet a fundamental want of human nature and that without them no religious order or organization could be maintained is very clear; but we consider them all subject to the law of change, and they must needs give way to other forms and ceremonies in the fullness of time. It is well that religious rites and ceremonies should be sacred in men's eyes, even to the verge of superstition; but let us not make them too sacred, lest we lose our spiritual vision and become idolaters. So far as the forms of religion quicken our aspirations and conserve the religious sentiment within us, they are both necessary and useful; when they fail to do this, they are but sounding brass and tinkling cymbal.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

HOW FAR MAY THE CHRISTIAN MINISTER OR  
TEACHER EVOLVE?

In view of these unceasing changes and modifications of Christian doctrine, what is the evolving priest or minister or theological teacher to do who desires to be faithful to the creed he has avowed and likewise faithful to the "inner light" of his own soul? By what chart or compass shall he steer his ship across the sea on which he has embarked? If good faith to the organization to which he belongs seems to conflict with the heavenly vision which has come to him, where shall he find an angel to direct his steps? If connection with his organization seems essential to his life work—and with most preachers this is the case—must he either close his eyes to the light, or relinquish the high calling to which he has consecrated and devoted himself? To preserve his honor and honesty must he either crucify his sacred convictions, or commit professional hari-kari before the eyes of his fellow men?

Perhaps the only answer that can be given to all such questions is, that he should walk through the world with open eyes and a conscience void

of offense, that he should look well to the purity and integrity of his motives and the righteousness of all his purposes, that the idea of service should ever be uppermost in his mind, and that his teaching should be a vital message. For however "orthodox" or however "heterodox" he may be, if he has a clear message from the depths of an honest soul, his doctrine is essentially true — otherwise it is essentially false. The true preacher must ever reveal himself as an *incarnation* of the truth which he preaches; he must have the right to say — with utmost humility, of course — I *am* the Truth!

How far he may honestly depart from the letter of his creed, or how far he may go in *assuming* its truth, after he has outgrown its literal interpretation, are questions too fine for any one but himself to answer, but if the principle of Truth and the love of Service be in him and abound, his proper course will not be far to seek or hard to find — for Wisdom is ever justified of her children.

We must concede that the preacher who strictly adheres to the rites and ceremonies of his church and satisfies his own soul with a message of conventional morality and theology may render a more or less important and necessary service to his fellow-men; but such a preacher can hardly

claim a place among the prophets of the Highest — his pulpit is not a tower from which the stars are watched!

But even more sacred than is the obligation of the individual preacher to deliver the message which has been committed to him while preserving the integrity of his own soul, is the obligation which rests upon every church to recognize the subjective side of truth and to tolerate and *encourage* the largest liberty that can be reconciled with the integrity of its organization in interpreting and expounding its imperfect doctrines and applying them to the practical life of the people; for only in this way can the spirit of Truth be glorified in the life of any church.

In all the affairs of life, from the highest official administration to the crudest forms of manual labor, a certain measure of individual judgment and discretion is allowed to every agent or workman. Therefore it is not too much to claim that no man can be a living preacher, unless he is allowed to breathe the air of free manhood — unless he can think freely and express his thoughts without other restraint than that which sound wisdom and discretion and a good conscience impose on him. Every preacher who wishes to prove himself worthy of his high vocation should have some message of faith and duty which is

all his own, some message which no one else can deliver, some truth which he has learned by meeting the Lord himself on the mountain. If he has no such a message, what can he teach his fellow-men that they do not already know? And why should he desire to preach to them at all?

And could any church commit a more unpardonable sin than to deny that spirit of prophecy which dwells in the souls of men, or forbid its expression except in prescribed terms and symbols?

If strict conformity to some creed or system of theology had always been the highest law for preachers of righteousness, would the message of the Old Testament prophets ever have been delivered? Would the voice of John the Baptist crying in the wilderness ever have been heard? Would Christianity itself ever have been established in the world? Think of imposing such conformity on a St. Paul, a Chrysostom, a Savonarola, a Luther, a Wesley, a Whitefield, a Channing, a Chapin, a Robertson, a Theodore Parker, a Horace Bushnell, a Phillips Brooks, a Robert Collyer, or a Henry Ward Beecher!

While we must concede the right of every church to maintain its organization and propagate its own doctrines — as a means of promoting the moral and spiritual life of the people — it

should be very slow to prosecute its ministers or teachers for "heresy," lest haply it be found stoning the prophets of the Lord!

CAPTER XXV.

TRUTH HAS AN ABIDING FOUNDATION—"ITS OWN  
REVOLVENCY UPHOLDS THE EARTH!"

Should all these things make us tremble for the foundations of Truth, or fear that religious faith and all other faith will perish from the earth?

If anyone is really afflicted with such fears, let him remember that there have been and may still be certain people who can not believe that the earth is round, because they think it would then have no *foundation*, such persons being unable to realize that the attraction of the sun and other heavenly bodies is a foundation that transcends conception, and must continue as long as the earth itself continues. Says the poet Cowper:

"By ceaseless action all that is subsists.  
Constant rotation of the unwearied wheel  
That Nature rides upon maintains her health,  
Her beauty, her fertility. She dreads  
An instant's pause, and lives but while she moves.  
Its own revolvency upholds the earth."

And if the earth needs no other foundation or support than its relation to all the forces of

Nature, should we desire any higher authority for our religious faiths than their relation to all truth and the aliment and inspiration which they furnish to the souls of men? Could the Lord of Truth himself place them on any higher or firmer foundation?

This, then, is our conclusion concerning all religions and all arts and sciences and philosophies and rules of life: As all the products of the material world that we can digest and assimilate — that is, turn into blood and bone and muscle — are entitled to be called Food, so whatever nourishes and sustains our mental and moral natures — whatever ministers to the life of our souls — whether it be fact or fancy or music or poetry or legend or mystery or sentiment or faith or hope or aspiration — bears the image and superscription of Truth, and should be recognized as Truth by us.

Is not this at least a partial and approximate answer to the question, "What is Truth?"

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And as the fruits of the earth can not be obtained for the nourishment of our bodies, without the cultivation of her soil, so the Truth we need for the nourishment of our higher natures

must be searched after with diligence and intelligence and with pure minds and hearts.

And even this is not all.

It is the opinion of some scientists — and we dare to believe they are right! — that the light and heat of the sun do not come to us in direct rays as from a luminous and combustible body, but are generated by a mysterious electric communication between the sun and the earth, the sun being no more a mass of light and fire than the earth itself. Whether our earth actually plays this part in the generation of its light and heat or not, *we* are certainly endowed with faculties that make us more than the mere recipients of Truth — are we not its agents and factors, yea, its creators, as well? Is it not at least our office to extract the Truth — the corn and wine and milk and honey of life — from all things that come to our perception and cognition by subjecting them to the process of mental digestion and assimilation? Are we not co-workers of the Lord of Truth in the establishment and maintenance of his kingdom in the earth?

And although we can not compass the absolute truth, but must see all things as through a glass darkly, that spirit of Truth which pervades the universe is ever ready to take up its abode

with us and give us light and peace. Let us not grieve this spirit, but ever cherish its presence within us; for verily it is superior to all arts and sciences and philosophies and codes of morals and systems of religion.

When we possess this spirit and are possessed of it, we will rejoice in whatever knowledge we attain and likewise in the mysteries that are beyond our powers of solution.

When we are possessed of this spirit we can see the many-sidedness of Truth and the limitations of our own minds, and will therefore be clothed with humility and charity as with a garment.

Possessed of this spirit we shall learn how to interpret all Nature's phenomena so as to see peace and order in her seeming conflicts, light amid her darkness and shadows, and tokens of wisdom and goodness in the play of all her mysterious forces. All Nature will then be to us not merely the garment of Deity but a revelation of his attributes and character.

Possessed of this spirit, we shall learn how to adapt ourselves to our "environment," so that all our experiences, whether of pain or pleasure, will be means of the highest *evolution* to our nature. The "moral uses of dark things" can

only be seen by those in whom the spirit of Truth abides.

Possessed of this spirit, we may plant our feet on the facts of the material world, while our souls may rise to Olympian heights where we shall hear the music of the spheres and see visions of immortal beauty and glory!

Possessed of this spirit, there will be no "conflict of religion and science" in our minds; for our religion will be scientific in the broadest possible sense, and whatever scientific knowledge we possess will be permeated with the adoration and worship of the Supreme and the Infinite.

Neither shall we be troubled on account of the seeming contradictions that we find in the realm of Truth; for we shall learn that all moral and spiritual truths are the combination or reconciliation of two opposing propositions, neither of which can be denied, and yet neither of which can be affirmed in such a manner as to exclude the other.

Possessed of this spirit, we shall realize that Truth is not a jealous tyrant seeking to trample on her sister virtues or drive them from her presence; rather she delights to stand in the center of them all, that she may shed her light and beauty upon them all!

Possessed of this spirit, we shall have no fears for the foundations of our faith; for we will realize that if all existing systems of morality, philosophy and religion were to be extinguished, out of the depths of men's souls would arise new systems, according to the wants and needs of the various nations and peoples and kindreds and tongues that dwell on the earth!

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away."

Wherefore, if the story of "the Fall" and many other narratives of our Scriptures must be remanded to the realm of legend and mythology, and the most cherished doctrines and dogmas which have come down to us from the centuries of the past must be "re-stated" and refined and spiritualized until we scarcely know by what name they should be called, the essential truth of these narratives and doctrines will yet remain in the souls of all men who love the Truth and worship at her altars.

If the miracles that were once counted chief among the "Evidences of Christianity" because they were wrought by supernatural power are now considered possible only so far as they are supposed to be the operation of some law or laws that we do not understand, there remains

the unceasing miracle of moral and spiritual power. This is the miracle of miracles, the miracle whereof we all are witnesses, the miracle which is from everlasting to everlasting. God always creates the heavens and the earth, and his Spirit always moves on the face of the waters — for those who have eyes to see and ears to hear. Should not all souls rejoice in the abiding presence of the Infinite?

Is not all natural power also supernatural? Is not all supernatural power also natural? We need no miracle to convince us that the sun shines on us from day to day — except the miracle of its light and heat!

If the Bible, which we once cherished — and perhaps worshiped — as a complete and infallible revelation from heaven, must now be pronounced a collection or literature of history and poetry and legends and allegories and moral maxims, written by men of senses, affections and passions like our own, we can still cherish it as a fountain of light and wisdom and comfort and inspiration — we may even *know* that it is inspired because it inspires us. And if we find the same proof of inspiration in other Scriptures and literatures, they too are our treasure and heritage. For verily the inspiration of the Spirit has not been lim-

ited to any given number of men, neither has it departed from the souls of all men now living on the earth! Has all communication ceased between Heaven and Earth? Does God no longer walk and talk with men?

If the doctrine of the Atonement in the form in which it has come down to us no longer stirs the depths of our hearts or commands the assent of our reason, we can hold fast to the principle of service and sacrifice which it involves; and above all, we can make our own lives worth living by devoting them to the service of our fellow-men.

Can any one claim to be a real believer in the "Atonement of Christ," unless he is fulfilling the same law that Christ fulfilled?—unless he is drinking of the same cup of which Christ drank, and is baptized with the same baptism wherewith he was baptized?

If the formal doctrine of the Trinity must be considered a mathematical or metaphysical puzzle which no man can solve, we can still believe in the manifold attributes of Deity and in the manifold manifestations of his character that we see in Nature and Providence and in the lives of all the men and women who bear his likeness and image.

If the glories of the future heaven must, indeed, fade from our eyes, we can still appreciate

the glory and fullness of our present life and be content that our bodies shall return to the earth and our spirits to the Infinite Spirit whence they came forth. The Judge of all the earth will do right — whatsoever he doeth !

Nay, if our whole Christian system, with all other systems of religion and philosophy, must be considered as subject to the inevitable processes of evolution and dissolution — if heaven and earth themselves must pass away — we can still believe — yea, rejoice — in the beauty of holiness, in the grace and charm of virtue, in the dignity and worth of righteousness, and in the divinity of all true manhood and womanhood.

And are we exercised, as we ever should be, concerning our individual duties and obligations? — are we anxious to fulfill that law of righteousness which is written in our hearts and consciences? — do we desire to serve our generation with all the talents that have been committed to us? — do we pray without ceasing that the highest moral standards and ideals may be revealed in our lives? Then let us ever cherish the Scripture which saith: “He hath shown thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to *love mercy*, and to walk humbly with thy God?” There is yet another Script-

ure which saith: "And now abideth Faith, Hope, Love — these three; but the greatest of these is Love!"

"Love makes the world go round!"

## ADDENDA.

## I.

In connection with all that we have said in Chapter iv concerning the plays of children, we would fain cry out in the ears of all the people against the factory life and sweatshop life to which so many little children are subjected even under American skies. O, righteous Heaven, is there no remedy for such infernal cruelty and barbarism!

"Do you hear the children weeping, O my brothers,  
Ere the sorrow comes with years?  
They are leaning their young heads against their  
mothers;  
And *that* can not stop their tears.  
The young lambs are frisking in the meadows;  
The young birds are chirping in the nest;  
The young fawns are playing with the shadows;  
The young flowers are blowing toward the west:—  
But the young, young children, O my brothers,  
They are weeping bitterly.  
They are weeping in the playtime of the others,  
In the country of the free!"

## II.

How easy it is for people of all classes to forget the principle of equality, which we briefly discussed in Chapter ix. Even parents and teachers and priests and ministers and the most zealous reformers are liable to forget that this principle should ever be cherished in their breasts, and that they can not truly serve their fellow-men without being as ready to give respect as to receive it.

We have even feared that many "penologists"

of our day are so accustomed to ringing the changes on "criminals" and "criminal classes" that they have become *crystallized*, and fail to remember that the only way we can do justice to the prisoner is *to put ourselves in his place*, and to study the prison question from the standpoint of the prisoner's cell! We fear they have become so absorbed in considering systems and methods of "discipline" as to forget that prisoners are men of like natures with the rest of mankind, and that the secret of all reformatory discipline is the maintenance of the prisoner's self-respect. Would that all prison officials, too, would remember that the subjects of their authority are creatures of the same flesh and blood as themselves!

### III.

To sustain the claim made in Chapter xvi that there is an actual process of evolution in the Catholic church, we need only compare the "encyclicals" of Pope Leo XIII with those of his predecessors, near and remote. Leo, indeed, is dead; but the spirit of his administration will live on through the ages, and the impress of his wisdom and humanity will be felt wherever the sign of the cross and the sacrifice of the mass are presented to the eyes of men.

### IV.

The miracle of moral and spiritual power spoken of in our last chapter is the miracle of which all other miracles are but types and shadows. This is the miracle which proves the being of God, the worth of human life and the eternity of all truth and righteousness. This miracle, more than all else, "points out an hereafter and intimates eternity to man!" It certainly

unites the finite and the Infinite, the human and the divine, in the closest and most vital relation.

## V.

Will our readers indulge us in a few more remarks concerning the principle of human equality, especially concerning its application to the labor question?

Even a wayfaring man, we think, ought to see that the mere question of *wages* does not reach the bottom of the issues between capital and labor; for underlying this question is the more vital question whether laboring men shall have any *power* in determining the wages they are to receive and the other conditions under which they are to be employed.

For it seems to us very clear, in the presence of such combinations of capital as we now have, that unless the body of laborers have a considerable measure of such power, not only would their wages be reduced to a very low figure, but their self-respect would be seriously impaired, if not almost extinguished.

When President George F. Baer, of the Reading Railroad, asserted the divine right of his coal companies to operate their mines without giving their employes any voice in the settlement of the various questions that were in dispute between the two parties, whether he realized that he was doing so or not, he trampled both the Declaration of Independence and the Golden Rule under his feet. He may not have meant to say to his employes that he was unwilling to respect their manhood, but he certainly sought to deprive them of all power to *command* his respect or his recognition of the principle of equality on which our government is based.

Many other capitalists and employers of labor, we fear, have imbibed the notion that they have an absolute

or divine right to everything which society permits them to "own," and that they must therefore be allowed to conduct their own business without reference to the rights of their employes or of the public. Why can we not all learn the simple truth that the ownership of property is a matter of public expediency alone? Why can we not learn that the divine right of property owners rests on the same basis—which is no basis at all—as the divine right of kings? How can the ownership of property give the heads of corporations any right to crucify the self-respect of their employes and reduce them to industrial slavery?

It is very easy to show that labor unions have often been blind and unreasonable, and in many cases have been guilty of serious excesses; but all this does not affect the truth of what we have claimed concerning the vital issue between capital and labor. Nay; the very errors and unlawful acts of organized labor ought to convince us that a proper *balance of power* and a proper respect for the manhood of laborers is the only possible solution of the problem that is before us. We may even assert in this connection, that it would be at least a partial solution of the various questions pertaining to "domestic service," if women in high social position would all recognize the fact that their "maids" and "servants" and "hired girls" have souls as well as themselves!

And whatever lessons have yet to be learned by organized labor, the owners and controllers of capital should always keep in mind that the men and women in their employ are not only entitled to decent wages, but to that recognition and respect which is the right of all human creatures under the sun. For verily, in that ideal realm where Truth and Justice sit enthroned, "all men are created equal."







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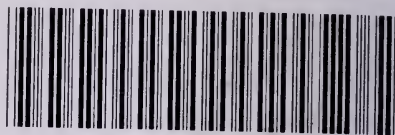
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